

2007 Environmental Justice and Air Pollution Workshop

Best Practices in Collaboration. Tools and Resources

U. S. EPA Region 9 Office

San Francisco, CA

September 6 – 7, 2007

SUMMARY OF PLENARY SESSION AT CLOSE OF FIRST DAY

This session was led by Stephanie Valentine (EPA Region 9) and was intended to provide reflection on what was learned and what should be adjusted for the second day of the workshop.

The following comments were provided by participants:

- Environmental justice is a human right of all living things which includes breathing, eating, trusting in one another, etc.
- We should learn from and share with each other; there should be a willingness to open exchange.
- There should be an increased awareness on environmental issues; it is not clear what actions or resources are needed, but it is important to identify these in order to bring about change.
- Need to push for legislative change to bring about change at the national level. Actions and resources should be placed in the right format and pressed forward over the next five years; who and how this is to be done should be identified to bring about a system-wide change across States and the country.
- There is a documentary on Sierra Club website or Sierra.org? about grass root EJ struggle

The following questions were raised:

- What skills can we share with each other?
- How does the EJ movement bring about change?
- What can help the government/community come to a place of action and outcomes that are system-wide?

Closing comments from Richard Moore (Southwest Network for Economic and Environmental Justice and Co-host of the EJ workshop):

Richard indicated that this has been a good day and thanked everyone for being flexible during the workshop. There is a need to continue the dialogue with a flexible agenda in order to move forward, keeping in mind that the environmental justice community:

- Doesn't need to reinvent the wheel; environmental justice has a long history and is doing this for it's members;

- Has created its own movement and history through a grassroots effort; a bottom-up approach, rather than national approach, is needed to strengthen the grassroots.
- Can't be allowed to separate and be pitted against each other.
- Needs to maintain its political, social, and economic personalities.
- Is solution-oriented for survival.
- Should not be forgotten between elections.

Richard further noted that as workshop participants

- We came to work together.
- We should leave with integrity and work on survival for the disadvantaged.
- We would have liked to have had more industry representatives involved.
- We should congratulate those on panels who have done a good job.
- Our continuing struggle will be important in the future.